DISTRICT/CHARTER COLLABORATION COMPACT A Collaboration to Transform Education in Baltimore

This District/Charter Collaboration Compact (the "Compact") represents a renewed commitment among district, charter and schools of choice leaders in Baltimore City Public Schools to continue improving the ways they work together and influence each other for the benefit of all students in the city, and to ensure that all children have access to high-quality public schools. Core commitments are enumerated in the Compact, as follows:

- 1. Baltimore City Schools Chief Executive Officer, the Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools leaders and Supporting Public Schools of Choice leaders ("Partners in this Compact") are committed to supporting a portfolio of high quality options for all students. Schools in the portfolio have varying levels of autonomy, and all are committed to the success of all Baltimore City Public School students. Core components of our Portfolio Management approach to district reform include:
 - a. Continue to build upon Baltimore City Schools' long history of creating new schools, expanding high performing schools, and most recently, closing schools that do not adequately serve our students, families and communities.
 - b. Continue to emphasize the role of Public Charter Schools as highly autonomous, highly accountable centers of innovation.
 - Continue to leverage Charter Schools and Transformation Schools, which
 are also managed under an operating contract, to expand possibilities for
 every school in Baltimore City.
- 2. Partners in this Compact are committed to increasing academic performance and expanding opportunities for success for all students. The strategy behind this approach is multi-faceted:
 - a. Give all students and families real choices about their education;
 - b. Allow students and families to leverage the power of social capital between schools and families when one chooses;
 - c. Use "choice" as a magnet to attract kids and families to the public school system who have been choosing to go elsewhere;
 - d. Use "choice" to give kids and families who may be zoned to low performing schools the opportunity to attend a higher performing school; Support schools' desire to attract students;
 - e. Support schools' desire to be responsive to students as central to their core mission;
 - f. Continue creating new schools as part of a school replacement strategy, by which lower performing schools are closed and high performing schools are expanded.
- 3. Partners in this Compact are committed to uphold, as an essential principle of a public charter school, its autonomy, flexibility, and capacity to change in the interests of continuous improvement and efficiency, student achievement, and further, that all Partners are interested in results, not inflexible prescriptions.

- Partners in this Compact are committed to operating and positioning public charter schools as partners in the city-wide effort to provide an excellent education for all students
- 5. Partners in this Compact are committed to fostering a cooperative and collaborative relationship between district and public charter schools.

We the undersigned share these core values:

- 1. High performing schools nurture and cultivate talented teachers, leaders, and support staff.
- 2. A healthy portfolio of schools requires a system-wide culture of innovation and a flexible approach toward trying new ideas.
- 3. A healthy school system has multiple avenues for being responsive to the distinctive needs of students and the distinctive needs of communities.
- 4. Each school is directly responsible for instruction and therefore must have the flexibility to make choices about their use of time, money, and talent.
- 5. All schools are held equally accountable for performance.
- 6. District strategy includes closure of low performing schools, and sustaining, replicating, or expanding more productive schools.

We the undersigned are committed to developing a portfolio of schools, including public charter and schools of choice, and to leveraging this Compact to push that work forward in a meaningful way, with an outcome of outstanding student achievement. Outcomes include:

- Increase the number of students who have access to high performing schools/increase the number of high quality seats available in City Schools by 5% of the total number of seat available annually, starting in SY 2011 – 12 based on a clear, outcomes-based definition of a high-quality school.
- 2. Increase the percentage of students living within 1.5 miles of a high quality school* to 100% by 2015
- 3. Increase the number of schools that qualify for a full five year renewal annually starting in SY 2011 12.*
 - * "High quality school" will be defined as part of the joint Compact work of City Schools, the Coalition, and SPSC. Baseline data for these measures will be determined with 2009-2010 data.

We, the undersigned, agree to the terms of the Compact.

	Date
Andres A Alonso	
CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools	
	Date
Neil Duke	
Chair, Baltimore Board of School Commissioners	
	Date
Bobbi R. Macdonald Co-Chair, Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools	
	Date
Cecil Gray	
Co-Chair, Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools	
	Date
Carol Beck	
Director, Supporting Public Schools of Choice	

District/Charter Collaboration Compact Partners

The **Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools)** is the Local Education Agency for Baltimore, Maryland, serving over 83,000 students in grades Pre-k through 12, including over 8,600 in charter schools and an additional 5,400 in schools operating under a district contract.

The Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools (Coalition) is a membership organization comprised of Baltimore's charter school operators, and further, that Baltimore's charter schools served over 8,600 students in 2009-2010. The Coalition represents 33 schools:

AFYA Public Charter School Baltimore Freedom Academy Baltimore International Academy Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School Baltimore Montessori Middle School (2011) Bluford Drew Jemison MST Academy City Neighbors Charter School City Neighbors Hamilton City Neighbors High School City Springs Elementary Middle School Collington Square Elementary Middle School ConneXions Coppin Academy **Empowerment Academy** Wolfe Street Academy

Hampstead Hill Academy

Independence Local I Inner Harbor East Academy KIPP Harmony KIPP Ujima Village Academy Maryland Academy of Technology and Health Sciences (MATHS) Midtown Academy Monarch Academy (2011) Northwood Appold Community Academy Patterson Park Public Charter School Roots and Branches (2011) Rosemont Elementary Middle School Southwest Baltimore Charter School The Crossroads School The Green School Tunbridge Elementary Middle School

Supporting Public Schools of Choice (SPSC) is a collaborative project of Baltimore's philanthropic foundations, which provides technical assistance and advocacy support to Baltimore's charter schools and to Transformation Schools - district initiated contract schools.

A **Maryland Charter School** is a school authorized to operate as a public school by the School Board of a Local Education Agency in conformity with Education Article §9–101et seq., and other applicable state and federal laws governing public schools in Maryland.

Commitments of the Partners in this Compact

This Compact commits district and charter leaders in Baltimore to improve the ways they will work together and influence each other for the benefit of all students in the city, and to ensure that all children have access to high-quality public schools. The individual responsibilities of each party, including the district chief executive officer, charter school leaders, and SPSC, are as follows:

Joint Commitments

The Coalition, SPSC, and City Schools will:

Commitment #1: Commit to expanding the number of high quality school options for students and using our collective creativity and innovation to drive reform in Baltimore by:

- A mutually agreed upon strategy to close low-performing schools, whether they are district, charter or transformation schools. Criteria and definitions for "non-performing" will be defined with the work of the newly convened Policy Workgroup (described below under Commitments of City Schools)
- A shared mutual obligation to replicate and/or expand, where possible, consistently high-performing schools, whether those schools are operated by the district or charter school providers.
- Develop a Purchase of Service model for services provided by the district which can be optional for charter schools, including but not limited to, school support networks, web site hosting, purchasing, and recruiting (using a frame of mandatory/legally required of Maryland public schools vs. optional services.) The Chief Financial Officer and charter leaders will convene in December 2010, with a goal of determining the first purchase of service options by March 1, 2011 in anticipation of budget development for the 2011-2012 school year. SPSC will provide staff support for this effort. This work will have two outcomes
 - Inform the work of City Schools to re-define the role of central office in support and monitoring of all schools as part of portfolio growth.
 - Further the autonomy/accountability balance by decreasing City Schools day-to-day oversight of operations in charter schools and giving charter schools additional control over certain components of operations.

Commitment #2: Commit to strengthening existing laws and policies that serve to strengthen the portfolio of schools, the district, and the city by:

 Revise the district's charter policy by January 2011 to incorporate lessons learned in the past seven years of charter authorizing.

- Refine the renewal process for charter schools, including the definition of high performing schools. This work will support SPSC's goal of creating targeted technical assistance.
- Define the components of high performing schools and include multiple measures of school performance, including growth data, effective teacher data, and parent and community satisfaction data, and other variables in keeping with the unique mission and vision of each school. This work will be taken on by the Policy Workgroup.
- Develop a shared legislative agenda for the upcoming session of the Maryland general Assembly. The CBCS, SPSC and City Schools leaders are engaged in planning with key stakeholders (Greater Baltimore Committee, ACLU, Teach for America, Mayor's office, community organizations, local funders). The group will coordinate its work on specific proposals to improve Maryland's charter law, promote teacher quality, address facilities needs for the system, and defend full funding of public education. A joint advocacy agenda will be developed by December 31, 2010, in preparation for the opening of the legislative session January 12, 2011.

Commitment #3: Commit to serving all students to the highest levels and providing opportunities for success to an ever expanding number of students and families by:

- Develop a mutually agreed upon coordinated approach on the timeline and citywide marketing efforts regarding School choice. Charters will maintain autonomy over the marketing, the enrollment and the school based lottery process.
- Design together a third party study that follows school lottery applicants and tracks and compares the performance of students. Variables may include type of school (choice, charter, traditional), level (elementary/middle/high), student choice (attending first choice of schools, other), student mobility. The study will aim to understand the value added by individual schools and sectors (choice and charter schools, traditional). Lessons learned from the collaboration and research study will inform policy and practical implementation of system wide choice; and will identify high performing schools as candidates for replication or for engagement as a turnaround partner.
- Continue collaboration in the collection, analysis and use of student outcome data particularly ensuring transparent reporting of student mobility and college ready graduation rates.

Commitments of the Baltimore City Public School System (City Schools)

City Schools recognizes that Maryland's current charter law is silent on charter school operating autonomy; and further, that in Maryland only Local Education Agencies can authorize charter schools. Despite these and other weaknesses in the current state law,

City Schools has authorized 32 charter schools, including 5 schools which converted from traditional to charter status. (Only 8 other charter schools exist in Maryland.)

City Schools is well positioned to improve the operating environment for the 32 (and future) charter schools which are part of its portfolio. The commitments outlined below will further Baltimore's leadership in creating an autonomy/accountability balance for its charter schools. This work will inform the CEO's work to re-invent how central office supports and monitors all district schools as more decisions are devolved to principals.

City Schools work with charter schools will address the weaknesses of the current state charter law and provide examples of district/charter collaboration for other LEA's in Maryland.

In support of the joint commitments made in this compact, City Schools will:

Commitment #1:

- Collaborate with charter and transformation schools to give students maximum opportunities to exercise choice, while minimizing the operating funds going to lease or debt payments. Through the newly-formed ONI, City Schools will document and evaluate several recent examples of assistance with the development of district and non-district facilities. These include support of private financing through loan guarantees and payment directives replicating, as well as providing City Schools facilities. A second step will be determining criteria for consideration of all forthcoming innovative financing arrangements based on school performance (if the school is already open) or an assessment of organizational capacity, strength of the educational plans, and their value added to the City Schools Portfolio.
- Continue to leverage partnerships to address facilities needs of all city schools, including minimizing the cost of a public charter in a traditional public school facility.
- Provide the benefits of school district economies of scale (e.g., contracts for purchasing supplies, products and services), at the option of public charter schools to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.
- Continue its commitment to transparency in budget development for all City Schools, including Fair Student Funding and the State funding model for all charter schools.

Commitment #2:

- Create an Office of New Initiatives (ONI) to lead several parts of the city-wide reform effort. City Schools will ensure that the scope of work includes providing a point person within ONI to interact with and serve nontraditional schools (including charter and Transformation Schools), so that these schools have an advocate and partner within the system by February 2011.
- Expand the Charter and New Schools Advisory Board to ensure broad representation by adding SPSC, the Coalition and leaders of Transformation schools to work with members of the Baltimore Board of School Commissioners by the end of November 2010. The Advisory Board currently reviews charter applications and makes recommendations to the CEO, and leads the renewal

- process. In addition, the Advisory Board will actively participate in vetting candidates for the newly created position of Executive Director of ONI, making recommendations to the City Schools Chief of Staff by the end of January 2011.
- Remove obstacles and barriers in system wide policy and operational guidance documents (directives to principals) that hinder the success of individual public charter schools; or which impede the potential of a charter school to implement its mission and vision.
- Convene a Policy Workgroup and review all current policies affecting charter and nontraditional schools. Members of the Workgroup will include charter operators, School Board Commissioners and City Schools staff. The Committee's charge will be to draft a revised Charter School policy for the Board of School Commissioners and to propose policies for other nontraditional schools. Revised policies will go to the school board for initial consideration by January 31, 2011. The Workgroup's primary goal is to define charter school operating autonomies. The group will weigh blanket waivers and develop recommendations for the differentiated implementation of City Schools' policy as it relates to non-traditional schools.

Commitment #3:

- Work in collaboration with the Coalition, SPSC, and all charter schools on issues related to enrollment and choice, and the implementation of the third party research study.
- Continue collaboration in the collection, analysis and use of student outcome data particularly ensuring transparent reporting of student mobility and college ready graduation rates.

Commitments of the Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools

Baltimore's charter schools are much more a part of the Baltimore City School System than charter schools in most of the rest of the country. Before charters, City Schools created "New Schools" with a primary goal of creating opportunities for inclusion of special needs students in more and better run schools. As a result of Maryland's restrictive charter law (2003) and this history Baltimore's charter schools embrace special education students; and fully participate in district data collection.

In support of the joint commitments made in this compact, the Coalition will:

Commitment #1:

- Create opportunities for educators to disseminate best practices, and share innovative work. Initiate a quarterly education newsletter and host at least one forum per year that brings together high-performing educators to collaborate with each other, including both district and charter teachers. An initial professional development day will be hosted by City Neighbors Public Charter Schools in January 2011.
- Continue to work with the district to locate schools in high-need areas, and to engage as partners in school turn around, where feasible. At the beginning of the

current school year, City Schools asked two Baltimore city Charter school operators to take on turn-around of failing traditional schools. At the request of the district, a third charter has agreed to serve as mentor to a traditional school team applying to become a charter conversion school.

- Apply jointly for grant funding with the district.
- Aggressively and publicly support the process of new school creation, expansion of high performing schools, and closure of low performing schools, including the nonrenewal or termination of low performing charter schools. This is a commitment to quality, on behalf of our students and their families.

Commitment #2:

- Actively participate in the Policy Work Group to be convened and the New and Charter Schools Advisory Board, to work collaboratively with City Schools on policy revision and the development of processes and procedures that support autonomy and accountability and innovation. This includes work on renewal and the definition of high performing, and low performing schools, and targeted support or technical assistance.
- Actively support the City Schools legislative agenda, including proposals to address the longstanding backlog of needed improvements to facilities throughout the district.

Commitment #3:

- Build on the longstanding practice of Baltimore's charter schools to create additional inclusion options for students with special needs. The Coalition will identify and highlight examples of special education teams which consistently write rigorous IEP (Individualized Education Plan) goals which are well supported by the school. Through the district's special education office, and other methods, such as the forum mentioned above, these practices will be shared to support the implementation of One Year Plus the district's new policy to improve outcomes for special education students. The district's goal is to promote development of IEP goals which support student growth aimed at closing the achievement gap between Students with IEP's and their non disabled peers.
- Continue to report data transparently regarding student retention and attainment rates in all charter schools.
- Work in collaboration with the City Schools, SPSC, and all charter schools on issues related to enrollment and choice, and the implementation of the third party research study.

Commitments of Supporting Public Schools of Choice (SPSC)

SPSC is the only full time project aimed at support and advocacy of the large and growing number of charter schools and other nontraditional schools. As such SPSC has an important role to play in Baltimore, in advocating with the school system on behalf of the schools and advocating on behalf of the school system with the state, the general assembly and other important stakeholders/decision-makers. The role of providing support

and technical assistance to schools is increasingly important as this compact highlights a commitment to quality.

In support of the joint commitments made in this compact, SPSC will:

Commitment #1:

- Provide part time staff support to the Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools (CBCS) and Baltimore Transformation (district contract) schools. A dedicated staff member will allow each coalition to be more proactive and less reactive when working with City Schools. Staff will help the CBCS execute its commitments in the compact; gather timely data from the schools to inform the joint work on purchase of services, budgeting, etc. This person will be engaged by December 2010.
- Provide targeted technical assistance to charter schools which achieve a 2 year renewal (rather than the maximum 5) in the coming renewal cycle. The goal is to achieve the maximum 5 year renewal when the schools are re-evaluated.
- Create a technical assistance program including identifying consultants, mentors, partners and direct support for schools in areas, such as: special education, governance, curriculum development, school culture, and operations – all topics identified through the renewal process or as aspects of the "quality" vs. "nonperforming" definitions. Work with City Schools to target technical assistance based on performance measures.
- Aggressively and publicly support the process of new school creation, expansion of high performing schools, and closure of low performing schools, including the nonrenewal or termination of low performing charter schools. This is a commitment to quality, on behalf of our students and their families.
- SPSC will allocate up to \$180,000 over the next 18 months to its support of technical assistance and other work to support the Compact.

Commitment #2:

- Provide staff support as needed to City Schools Advisory Board, and the Policy Workgroup, attending meetings regularly and participating in all discussions concerning the work of the Advisory Board, for the purpose of pushing the development of new and innovative systems, aimed at increased student achievement.
- Actively support the legislative agenda developed in partnership with City Schools and the Coalition of Baltimore Charter Schools, including proposals to address the longstanding backlog of needed improvements to facilities throughout the district.

Commitment #3:

 Work in collaboration with the City Schools, the Coalition, and all charter schools on issues related to enrollment and choice, and the implementation of the third party research study.